

Spring 2023

Welcome!

Dear members of the BIDMC Long COVID community,

We're thrilled to share with you the first issue of our Long COVID Newsletter!

As we continue to learn more about Long COVID, we wanted to have a place to provide these updates and share information with patients and the medical community. We hope to do that here.

We're so glad you're part of this team and look forward to continuing this journey with the support of our BIDMC team and patients.

Sincerely,

Jason Maley, MD, and Amberly Ticotsky, RN

COVID-19 and Critical Illness Survivorship Program

BIDMC COVID-19 Survivorship Program

Here at BIDMC, we have developed an integrated team of specialists so that patient care is convenient, coordinated, and focused on the priorities of our patients and families.

Our team includes specialists with expertise in:

- Lung diseases and critical illness (pulmonary and critical care medicine)
- Brain and nerve diseases (cognitive and neuromuscular neurologists, neuropsychologists)
- Mental health (psychiatry and social work)
- Airway and voice disorders (laryngologists)
- Aging and frailty (geriatricians)
- Physical and occupational therapists for fatigue, shortness of breath, and cognitive impairment

To date, we are working with over 20 providers within the BIDMC Network and caring for over 1,200 patients.

Long COVID Research at BIDMC

There are several studies currently recruiting patients at BIDMC. The NIH RECOVER study is a multi-year study to understand the impact and causes of long COVID. We also have studies looking at the impact of COVID-19 on the heart and the connection between sleep and pain as part of long COVID. To find out about research happening around you, [visit our research website](#).



The following research studies are currently being conducted at BIDMC. Please reach out to if you are interested in learning more about participating:

- **CLEO Study:** looking at the cardiac impacts of COVID. Contact CLEO@bidmc.harvard.edu for more information
- **SLEEP Study:** looking to understand the role of sleep in the development and persistence of symptoms that are common in Long COVID, such as pain. Email the research team for more information at COVIDSleep@bidmc.harvard.edu

DID YOU KNOW?

The Sadhguru Center offers a free holistic program for COVID long-haulers that teaches evidence-based yogic breathing and meditative practices to support their recovery from both physical and mental symptoms? Click [HERE](#) for more

New Research



In January 2023, a new article summarizing the potential causes of Long COVID was published entitled, "[Long COVID: major findings, mechanisms and recommendations](#)." One of the highlights of this paper is a summary of proposed causes of Long COVID, which we will summarize below.

Several proposed potential causes of Long COVID include:

- Continued inappropriate activity of the immune system after infection resulting in damage from chronic inflammation
- Persistence of the virus in parts of the body, leading to inflammation
- The infection triggering the body to attack itself (autoimmunity)
- Blood clotting and blood vessel injury leading to poor blood flow throughout the body
- Injury to the brain and nerves (including nerves of sensation and the autonomic nerves) as a result of ongoing inflammation

Team Member Spotlight

Tulsi Chase is the Head of Education & Outreach at the Sadhguru Center for a Conscious Planet, a multidisciplinary research center at BIDMC. With a Masters from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Tulsi designs and facilitates various mind-body programs for research at Sadhguru Center to support the health and well-being of patients and healthcare providers. She is an expert yoga teacher with over 3,000 hours of training from the renowned Classical Hatha Yoga School at Isha Yoga Centre, India. Tulsi has had the honor of leading various wellness experiences for leaders nationally and internationally, including at Harvard, Google, Tesla, and Amazon. She lives in Roslindale with her husband and their three-legged pup.



One of Tulsi's first projects with the Sadhguru Center was to design and implement the Breathing Rehabilitation & Wellness Program for COVID Long-Haulers at BIDMC. Since April 2021, this program has been offered online as a free and easily accessible resource to support the mental and physical health of Long-Haulers with a variety of symptoms. Today the program has expanded to involve 12 expert teachers from six time zones who volunteer their time to teach breathing and meditation techniques to small groups weekly via Zoom. Over 632 patients have been referred to the program from across the globe, including from BIDMC, UPenn, and Oregon. Since learning that her own father has also been diagnosed with Long COVID, Tulsi is even more motivated to support the community with such programs. Additionally, she works with some Long-Haulers in-person to teach personalized yoga and meditation workshops in Brookline.

Long COVID Resources

Our goal is to use this space to highlight a resource our community has found helpful, something new we have been using, or other Long COVID resources.

The first resource we will highlight is one that our team social worker created!

This behavioral health guide serves as a thorough reference for self-care and wellbeing, and includes a list of resources for more information.

Click here to access the [Behavioral Health Guide](#)

Wellness Corner

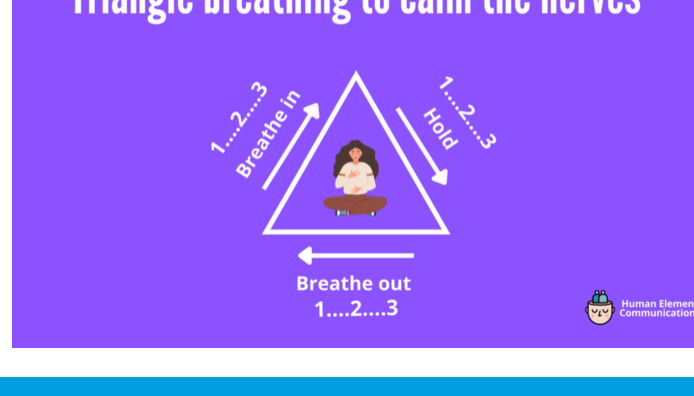
This edition's Wellness Corner is written by Jackie French, LICSW, Long COVID Team Social Worker:

We know that Long COVID can bring a wide variety of changes to physical, cognitive, and emotional functioning among others. It's hard to find any area of life that doesn't get impacted by this illness! Many people who have been living with Long COVID share that they often feel like they are on a "rollercoaster" of physical and emotional symptoms. Further, just adjusting to the challenges and limitations that Long COVID presents a major struggle for patients and families, and we know that physical and mental health are closely connected. All our patients are working hard to feel better physically, and the hope for this section is to provide information on resources and exercises that can enhance your ability to cope with your current circumstances as you continue that fight.

Breathing Exercises

Diaphragmatic Breathing: Sit comfortably and place one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly. Take a deep breath, filling your lungs completely so that your belly pushes outward. This helps us know that we are fully expanding our lungs so that oxygen can be better distributed throughout our bodies. This is a simple exercise you can do when feeling stressed, upset, or just trying to unwind.

Triangle Breathing: This is a great technique to interrupt the fight or flight system that gets activated when we are in moments of acute distress or anxiety. The idea is to add a pause or 'hold' between your inhale and exhale. So, an easy way to start is: breathe in for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, and breathe out for 3 seconds. Try this a few times, and increase or decrease the time as needed. It's helpful to incorporate this into your daily life.



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[Visit our Critical Illness & COVID-19 Survivorship Website](#)

